

Written Communications

Framing and Articulating Ideas Through Writing

Presented by Sara M. Costanzo

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Today's Agenda

- Introductions/Weltman overview
- Goals of improved communication
- Communication considerations
- Communication modes
- Forms of communication
- Written communication
- Choosing a proper method
- Impact of social media
- Legal implications

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About Us

- Nationally-recognized full-service collections firm
- We represent nearly every type of creditor, both locally and nationally in:
 - Bankruptcy
 - Consumer and Commercial Collections
 - Litigation
 - Real Estate Default matters



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About Us

- We operate with the strictest adherence to compliance and security standards, with a premium on reputation management
- To learn more about our leadership in accounts receivables management, visit weltman.com



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Goals of Improved Communication

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Written Communication

- Involves any type of interaction that makes use of the written word. Communication is a key to any endeavor involving more than one person.
- Communicating through writing is essential in the modern world and is becoming ever more so as we participate in what is now commonly called the information age.
- The most common form of business communication.

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Written Communication

- The information age has altered the ways in which we communicate and placed an increasing emphasis on written versus oral communications.
- What Corporate America Can't Build: A Sentence.
 - E-mail is a party to which English teachers have not been invited
 - According to The National Commission on Writing study, a third of employees in the nation's "blue chip" companies write poorly and are in need of remedial writing instruction.

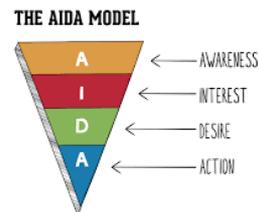


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Goals of Improved Communication

- Better communication with constituents- bridging the gap between age groups and demographics
- Improve community engagement
- Collaboration and exchange of ideas
- Little to no cost solution



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Goals of Improved Communication

- Good communication:
 - Extends from the way that a user experiences a service
 - Ensures that you are being heard
 - Influences your environment according to your own goals and requirements
- If you do not get your message across effectively, others will not know or understand your needs



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Goals of Improved Communication

- Effective communication achieves the following:
 - Positive influence on decision-making by presenting a strong point of view and developing mutual understanding
 - Delivers efficient decisions and solutions by providing accurate, timely and relevant information
 - Enables mutually beneficial solutions
 - Builds healthy relationships by encouraging trust and understanding



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Communication Considerations

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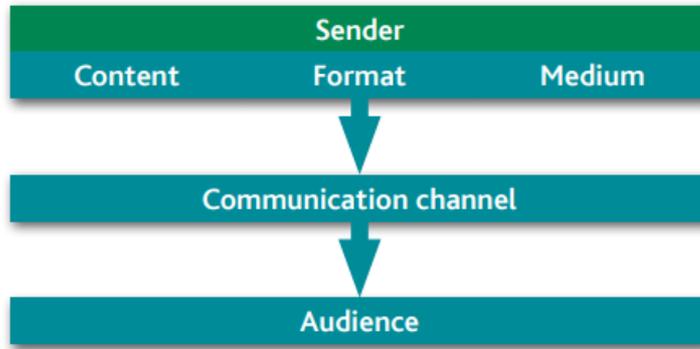
7 C's of Communication

1. Clear
2. Concise
 - a. Winston Churchill wisely stated, "Big men use little words, and little men use big words."
3. Concrete
4. Correct
5. Consider the writer / audience
6. Complete
7. Courteous



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Stages of Communication



Communication Modes

3 Modes of Communication

- What is a mode of communication?
 - Mode is used to describe the way something is done or experienced. When using the phrase "mode of communication," this describes the way communication is expressed, or the method of communication.
- There are 3 types:
 1. Interpersonal communication
 2. Interpretive communication
 3. Presentational communication



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Interpersonal Communication

- A two-way means of communication that allows the participants to evaluate and respond to each other.
- The key characteristic of interpersonal communication is that it involves a spontaneous exchange of information: One participant states information or expresses feelings, and the other participant listens to what is said and responds accordingly.



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Interpretive Communication

- One way form of communication to understand, interpret and analyze what is heard, read or viewed
- No recourse to the active negotiation of meaning
- Reading, viewing or listening



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Presentational Communication

- One way communication intended to facilitate interpretation by members of the other culture, where no direct opportunity for the active negotiation of meaning between members of two cultures exist
- Writing, speaking or visually presenting



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10 Simple Tips to Remember

1. Have something to say
2. Be specific
3. Choose simple words
4. Write short sentences
5. Use the active voice
6. Keep paragraphs short
7. Eliminate fluff words
8. Don't ramble
9. Don't be redundant/repeat yourself
10. Don't over write



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Forms of Communication

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5 Forms of Communication

1. Listening
2. Oral communication
3. Non-verbal / interpersonal communication
 - a. Eye contact, facial expressions, body language
4. *Written communication*
5. Formal & informal communication



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Core Listening Skills

- Listening is a vital part of communication
 - Giving the other party your full attention.
 - Encouraging the audience to speak. Use open-ended questions.
 - Showing that you are genuinely listening by nodding, repeating back what they have said but in your own words.
 - Acknowledging the audience's feelings.
 - Asking for clarification when you do not understand.
 - Not judging - trying to understand their point of view, rather than immediately applying your own preconceptions about the respondent.
 - Not interrupting - letting the other party put over their response fully before you react. Giving them time to express their point of view.
 - Being cautious in expressing your opinion. If it is clearly not appropriate don't express it.
 - Being timely in your reaction to the other party's responses to your messages - this is particularly true with communication that is not verbal.



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Oral Communication

- It is important to ensure the audience clearly understands what is being said so it requires strong speaking and listening skills of the communicator.
- The most effective method of enabling two-way communication and dialogue.



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Non-Verbal Communication

- We send out messages that are neither oral nor written yet can be equally, or in some cases more, persuasive.
- Areas to consider the following:
 - Attitude
 - Body language
 - Making eye contact
 - Talking to and making visual contact with all stakeholders present, not just one or two
 - Smiling when appropriate
 - Having a confident, open, but not aggressive posture
 - Looking engaged and interested, particularly when others are speaking
 - Branding and Presentation



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Written Communication

- Writing is used when you need to provide detailed information such as figures and facts, even during face-to-face methods.
 - Providing written figures, when the communication has to be formal or when stakeholders need time to consider information such as providing reports for a management meeting.
 - It is also generally used to send documents and other important material to stakeholders, which can then be stored for later use.
 - Written information can be referred to easily as it is recorded. Other important documents such as contracts, memos, and minutes of meetings are also provided in written form for this purpose.



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Written Communication

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Written Communication

- Advantages
 - Written messages do not have to be delivered on the spur of the moment; instead, they can be edited and revised several times before they are sent so that the content can be shaped to maximum effect;
 - Provides a permanent record of the messages and can be saved for later study;
 - Enable recipients to take more time in reviewing the message and providing appropriate feedback;
 - Increased customer/client satisfaction;
 - Improved inter-organizational efficiency; and
 - Enhanced image in the community and industry



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Written Communication

- Disadvantages
 - The sender of written communication does not generally receive immediate feedback to his or her message
 - Often take more time to compose, both because of their information-packed nature and the difficulty that many individuals have in composing such correspondence
 - More can be read/interpreted into words without human contact included



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Written Communication

- Answer all the questions relevant to the audience:
 - Who
 - What
 - Where
 - When
 - How



Written Communication

- Call the audience to action
 - The content of documents that are simply informative are rarely retained very well.
 - Most communication is meant to achieve some purpose, so make sure they include a call to action – something that the reader is expected to *do*.
 - Don't leave it to readers to decide what to do with whatever information is provided – most won't even bother, and enough of the ones who do, will get it wrong.

Written Communication

- Be the decision maker
 - Don't provide too many choices, or ideally, none at all.
 - If looking to set a time for a meeting:
 - Give a single time and ask them to confirm or present a different time, or
 - At most, give two options and ask them to pick one.
 - Too many choices often leads to decision paralysis, which generally isn't the desired effect.



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Written Communication

- Create a benefit
 - A cornerstone of effective writing is describing benefits, not features.
 - Why should a reader care?
 - Benefits engage readers, since they're naturally most concerned with finding out how they can make their lives easier or better.



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Written Communication

- Drilling down clarity
 - Unsmother verbs
 - Avoid adjectives
 - Rely on the power of short words
 - Write to express, not impress
 - Use small, old words where you can. If a long word says just what you want to say, do not fear to use it. But know that our tongue is rich in crisp, brisk, swift, short words. Make them the spine and the heart of what you speak and write. Short words are like fast friends. They will not let you down.
 - Richard Lederer, *The Miracle of Language*

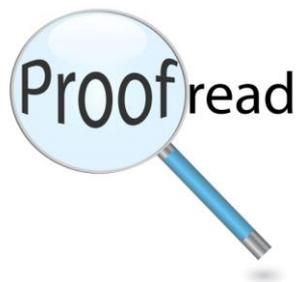


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Written Communication

PROOF READ



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Written Communication

4 Types of Business Writing

1. **Instructional** - Instructional business writing provides the reader with the information needed to complete a task. The task may need to be accomplished immediately or it may be for future reference.
2. **Informational** - Reference material to communicate business and technical or financial information.
3. **Persuasive** - May be direct, with focus on a specific item, or indirect, with focus on developing the relationship, to convey information and to convince the reader that the presented information offers the best value.
4. **Transactional** - These documents are used to progress general operations. They are also used to convey good and bad news, often associated with human resource processes.



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Choosing a Proper Method

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Choose the Method *Wisely*

- Criteria to help you choose the communication methods wisely:
 - Level of sensitivity of information to be communicated
 - Relationship
 - Communication method the recipient prefers
 - Your preferred communication method
 - Amount of information to be shared
 - Urgency
 - Efficiency of the communication process



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Quick Reference

1. When delivering delicate information, pick up the phone or meet in person.
2. When a lot of detailed information must be conveyed, email may be best.
3. When sending directions, phone numbers, and similar information, text and/or email.
4. If the message is time-sensitive, consider using two forms of communication, such as an email and a phone call or text (depending on the recipient).
5. Snail mail is still good for a personal, handwritten note, like a thank-you note.
6. If something extremely important needs discussed, consider doing it in person.
7. Skype and other video conferencing programs are great communication options.
8. Don't put anything in writing (email/text/social media) that wouldn't be welcomed plastered on the front page of the New York Times.



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4 Step Process

Start by identifying the channel that best supports the targeted objectives — and then take these four steps to optimize your *channel* strategy:

1. **Add and use different channels** more frequently as they become more popular and as necessary to reach specific audiences. Research current stakeholder behaviors on different channels such as social media, and determine which ones they use and which are influential.
2. **Experiment with new channels** and measure their effectiveness before using them frequently.
3. **Evaluate your channel options** and select the channel mix that is most appropriate for your objective and target audience. For example, consider which nontraditional channels are best for different types of employees, such as remote workers.
4. **Use the channel selection guide** below to identify which channels are best suited for your communication objectives.



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4 Step Process

Channel Type	Example	Good Way To	Pros	Cons
Central communications (one to many)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Press release - E-mail - Memo - Intranet post 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update/inform a large group about a issues of "big" concern/initiative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scalable - Reaches multiple stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Difficult to gauge impact - Limited opportunity to clarify
Leader presentation (one to many)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Media interview - Press conference - Town halls - CEO video/blogs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Motivate and energize audience - Make important announcement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good way to address issues - Highly credible source 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One-way communication - Audience often intimidated to ask questions
Manager cascade (one to few)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication in team meetings - Emails 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inform/update on team specific and/or sensitive matters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trusted source - Personal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Messages often fail to get through - Manager not familiar/bought-in
Manager dialogue (interactive)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group discussion - Manager one-on-one 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Problem solve/gain feedback - Translate strategy into action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Helps resolve issues - Drives behavioral change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Time intensive - High variability in manager communication skill
Mobile and social media updates (one to many)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Company blogs - Intranet - Twitter account - SMS mobile - Company Facebook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Time sensitive information updates/alerts - Humanizing the company 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ease of access to information - Tracking sentiment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If not done properly, company can be seen as 'phony'
Social media participation (interactive)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion forums - Blogs - Twitter - YouTube 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sharing viewpoints - Engaging in debates - Creating a dialog 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Builds engagement - Gives a human face to the company 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Little control over the communication - Possible rejection of corporate agenda
Enabling advocates (many to many)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employees - Suppliers - Customers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reputation management - Reaching out to skeptical audiences - Spread viral message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trusted sources - High resonance - High "stickiness" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ability to find suitable advocates - Time sensitive



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Impact of Social Media

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Impact of Social Media

- Social networking sites
 - Facebook
 - Twitter
 - Linked In
- Social review sites
 - Yelp
 - Trip Advisor
- Media sharing networks
 - Instagram
 - Snapchat
 - Youtube
 - Vimeo
- Community blogs
 - Medium
 - Tumblr
- Discussion sites
 - Reddit
 - Quora
- Sharing economy networks
 - Air BnB
 - Rover

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Impact of Social Media

- Many governments have problems in their communication due to low budget and because they put communication with stakeholders as a low priority.
- Governments use the traditional methods of communication such as newspapers, radio and television; this one-way communication reflects the low feedback of stakeholders to communicate with government, which leads to low participation from stakeholder's side.
- Social media enables the democracy to be shared internationally, enables the citizens to express their opinions, and the governments to get feedback from their citizens.



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Impact of Social Media

- Risks
- Blurred line between personal and professional use
- Lack of control over site
- Potential criticism of negative feedback
- Difficulty maintaining public records
- The internet is forever - once posted it can't be taken back



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Impact of Social Media

- Rewards
 - Inexpensive
 - Easy to monitor
 - Can engage in direct dialogue
 - Provides prompt emergency/crisis forum
 - Builds trust through citizen engagement



Impact of Social Media

- Key Benefits
 - Transparency - which is the release the information for which stakeholders are always checking.
 - Participation - is to maintain citizens engaged with their governments, by allowing citizens to express their opinions, experiences and wisdoms. Governments can use a survey to get feedback from citizens before any decision is taken, then pass this information to different government agencies for actions to be taken.
 - Collaboration - is the high level engagement between government and citizens, where citizens participate by creating the content of government topics and the government use and follow the content generated by citizens to fulfill government mission

Impact of Social Media

- Transparency-the availability of information on matters of public concern, the ability of citizens to participate in political decision-making, and the accountability of government to public opinion.
- Governmental transparency allows the public to develop a more accurate picture of what is happening in government, which allows citizens to hold governments accountable and evaluate performances of government agencies.



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Legal Considerations

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Legal Considerations

Be sensitive to the following language in a professional document:

- Race and gender roles
- Political correctness
- Generalizations
- Cultural awareness
- Religious symbols



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Legal Considerations

- Drafting policy around communications
 - Standard Operating Policy
 - Public Records Policy
- NLRB – 3 memos detailing social media cases



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Legal Considerations

- **149.43 Availability of public records for inspection and copying.**
- (A) As used in this section:
- (1) "Public record" means records kept by any public office, including, but not limited to, state, county, city, village, township, and school district units, and records pertaining to the delivery of educational services by an alternative school in this state kept by the nonprofit or for-profit entity operating the alternative school pursuant to section [3313.533](#) of the Revised Code.



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Legal Considerations

- **149.43 Availability of public records for inspection and copying.**
- (B) (1) Upon request ..., all public records responsive to the request shall be promptly prepared and made available for inspection to any person at all reasonable times during regular business hours. ... If a public record contains information that is exempt from the duty to permit public inspection or to copy the public record, the public office or the person responsible for the public record shall make available all of the information within the public record that is not exempt. ...



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Legal Considerations

- **149.43 Availability of public records for inspection and copying.**
- (B) (2) To facilitate broader access to public records, a public office or the person responsible for public records shall organize and maintain public records in a manner that they can be made available for inspection or copying ... A public office also shall have available a copy of its current records retention schedule at a location readily available to the public.

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Questions?



Please feel free to contact me anytime:



Sara M. Costanzo

Shareholder

Government Collections

216.685.1039

scostanzo@weltman.com

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